MOMBASA | Diagnosis faulted

Low number of

children taking

ARVs ‘alarming’

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Only 20 per cent of

children infected with

HIV/Aids in Mombasa

County are receiving anti-retroviral

drugs.

“Mombasa is performing

badly in terms of putting children

on ARV treatment,” Dr

Hadija Shikely, the county director

of health, said yesterday

during a forum on funding the

war against the disease.

According to her, only

about 20 per cent of children

living with the disease were

on ARVs

“Children are taken to hospital

with recurrent malaria, flu,

pneumonia and malnutrition,

and are just treated and discharged.

These children may

be HIV positive,” she said.

She attributed the small

percentage of children receiving

the crucial medication to

poor diagnosis at some health

centres and lack of adequate

awareness about the virus

and its management at the

community level.

“The county needs 210 community

units but we only have

40,” said Dr Shikely.

She said the prevalence rate

for mother-to-child transmission

has also not improved

because a large number of

expectant mothers continue

to deliver at home without the

supervision of trained health

workers.

Many infected adults are also

not taking ARV treatment while

others are not getting tested

for the disease.

She said the fight against

Aids is further hindered by

some patients who skip treatment

and develop resistance to

medication upon resumption.

At the same time, a member

of the Mombasa People Living

with HIV Support Network, Mr

Jecktone Chilo, said discrimination

against people who

are infected and inadequate

resources for awareness programmes

were crippling the

fight against the disease in

the county.

**Figures worrying**

National Empowerment

Network of People Living with

HIV/Aids in Kenya executive

director Nelson Otwoma said

the figures for the region were

worrying, especially after it was

recently ranked fifth out of 47

counties in terms of infections

in the Kenya Aids Indicator

Survey.

Mr Otwoma said one of the

major challenges in fighting

HIV/Aids remains the low levels

of testing and counselling

among infected people.

Only 20 per cent of

those infected with

virus are receiving

the crucial medicine

40

**Number of community**

**centres in Mombasa**

**against the 210 the**

**county needs**

5**Mombasa’s rank out of**

**the 47 counties in terms**

**of infections**